

6. PROTECTING FOOD CROPS FROM WILD ANIMALS

It might interest some of your readers to learn that a Wolseley Electric Fencer can be used with success in keeping elephants and other animals out of crops. This simple unit is produced by the Wolseley Sheep Shearing Company in the U.K., and is a very compact little affair. Either an inert 6-volt battery, available from the same company, or an ordinary car battery can be used with the apparatus. I found a single line of electrified barbed wire, set about 3 ft. from the ground round the cultivated area was sufficient to keep elephants and sambar out. To keep chital and pig out I added 2 lines of unelectrified barbed wire under the electrified line at 2 ft. and 1 ft. The current is naturally, only switched on at nights. The shock, though not dangerous, is quite appreciable; about equal to that felt on contact with an automobile plug wire. It is essential of course to make a periodical inspection of the wire to ensure that no jungle growth, twigs etc. are touching the line as such will tend to gradually short-circuit the battery. Elephants attempted to raid our ragi fields, protected by the 'electric fencer', on four occasions, and were repelled on contact with the wire each time; twice an elephant was 'stung' on its trunk first and then, swinging round, got it on its backside and pushed off!

On a moonlight night, before the unelectrified lower lines had been added, a tiger and a wild boar had, while having a skirmish, got into the field; and the encounter was eagerly watched by the Sholagas (the local jungle tribe) on nearby watchman's machans. They hoped that the tiger would kill the pig; and that they would then be able to drive the former off its victim by making a din, and have the pork to themselves! However, our overseer there, and his men in the field camp, heard the row made by the combatants and sallied forth to the spot with torches and, much to the Sholagas' chagrin, drove the animals out of the field!

HONNAMETTI ESTATE,

ATTIKAN P.O.

VIA MYSORE,

27th December, 1950.

R. C. MORRIS

7. JEEP VERSUS ELEPHANT

On December 17th 1950 while returning in my jeep at night along the Hassanur-Kollegal road after a final search for the missing ill-fated Air-India plane, I came on a solitary tusker walking up the road tail on, about 30 yards ahead. I immediately stopped, but kept the headlights on and the engine running. Perhaps the sound of the latter irritated the elephant; for it suddenly whipped round and charged. I just had time to put the jeep into reverse, which lessened the impact somewhat. The collision however with such a hard object was not to the elephant's liking and it swung away with a shrill trumpet. Out jumped our dog (Spaniel-Alsatian cross!) which is normally an arrant coward where all wild animals are concerned, and for a few seconds I had glimpses of 'Smoke' (the dog) and the elephant whirling round and round in front of the jeep—to the accompaniment of